Tuesday Morning 20 March

Truly, my dear Gray, I must think with your (much) gentler half, that you were somewhat "crofs" on the morning of Saturday - Erayia spinosa, quotha - no, nor does even the superlative adjective spinosissima, come up to my ideas - nothing short of E. ferox, or E. horrida seems to suffice as indicative of the specific character of the writer of the letter before me! Perhaps E. Hystrix might be appropriate, for the following paragraph does really represent the prickly (but harmless(!)) little animal rolled up upon himself, concealing all his softer parts from view, & presenting only his sharp spines to all & sundry -

> "I have not time nor patience to write to you. I will answer all your questions & talk over all sorts of quiddities when you come on. But write I will not - that's flat" - !!!

Why the very paper seems to hiss & fizz; & the corners of the sheet would soon turn up, did I not keep it from bouncing by holding them down with my left arm, whilst I write - meekly did I lay before you my (perhaps insufficient, or even injudicious) conclusions, when lo! with your cotton force is discharged upon me your annihilating missive! Well, I have the comfortable reflection that the exploded charge leaves an empty barrel; & even the Hedge-hog has by far the largest period of his life devoted to repose - I must therefore this letter may reach you, in the Evening, when, like that amiable animal, you are quietly occupied in munching your weeds - Black-beetles (?) Be this as it may - I would deprecate your further ire, & thankfully acknowledge the kindness of your proposition, even whilst I feel constrained to decline it,

in accordance with my already expressed views on the subject. But there is one point on which, could I hope to realize the scornful force of your peculiar style, I would even feel disposed to try my own hand at scolding - How could you suppose that I would permit you to set Dollars (fie on 'em!) against any little services I might render you, within or without doors, whilst a sojourner under your friendly Roof? I thought you knew me better, by this time, than to believe that even you dogmatic & (obst.) firm as you are, could by any possible means bring me to acquiesce in such an arrangement - "Oh! Mr. Whitbread, fie upon you, Sir"!

Your other view is a correct one - My Chambers do, in fact, cost me as you suppose; & the rent is payable equally whether I occupy them or not - but I have so many traps - not Household Gods, certainly; nor exactly, perhaps imps, but plagues & incumbrances, when not needed, but which must yet be cared for, & bestowed somewhere - & are too cumbrous to be toted great distances without much exp.e & inconvenience.

And now, once more thanking you for the kindness which you threw at my head so ferociously -

I am, My D.r Gray
Very Sincerely. Yrs. &c

To Mrs Gray!

Tuesday Morning

My dear Mrs Gray - With the sincerest sorrow do I learn that your health is again declining - I had hoped better things, & feel disappointed, tho' I shall still continue to hope that the coming Summer will set you up -

I dare not write to your Liege Lord any requisition upon his time - however short - lest I shall again put him in one of his tantrums, from the effects of the last of which I have not yet recovered - I pray you, therefore, to get from this lordly lion of yours (when he is not lashing himself with his tail, & foaming at the mouth) the style & address of M. Maquin-Tandon, to whom I may have occasion to send a Paper, by & bye, if I get one from Silliman. Also, if it seems safe to risk the chafing of the noble animal by further queries, try to get out of him Dr. Bromfield's address. "Feeding time" is not thought the safest, I believe, for approaching (Sav.) wild animals - but I leave the time when - & the manner how to your woman's wit - which will not fail - In fact, we have here, at this time, a certain Miss — whose name & portrait are on the posting-bills, & who goes into the Den of Lions - Van Amburg fashion! The thing is to be done, therefore. I heartily thank you for the kind & friendly manner in which you second the Doctor's invitation, & which I do not eliminate the less, in that I decline to avail myself of it on the present occasion - I beg my best respects to your good papa, & love to the ladies & kind regards to the Gentlemen of the weekly party — Very sincerely Yrs. &c

Prof.r A. Gray
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Massachusetts